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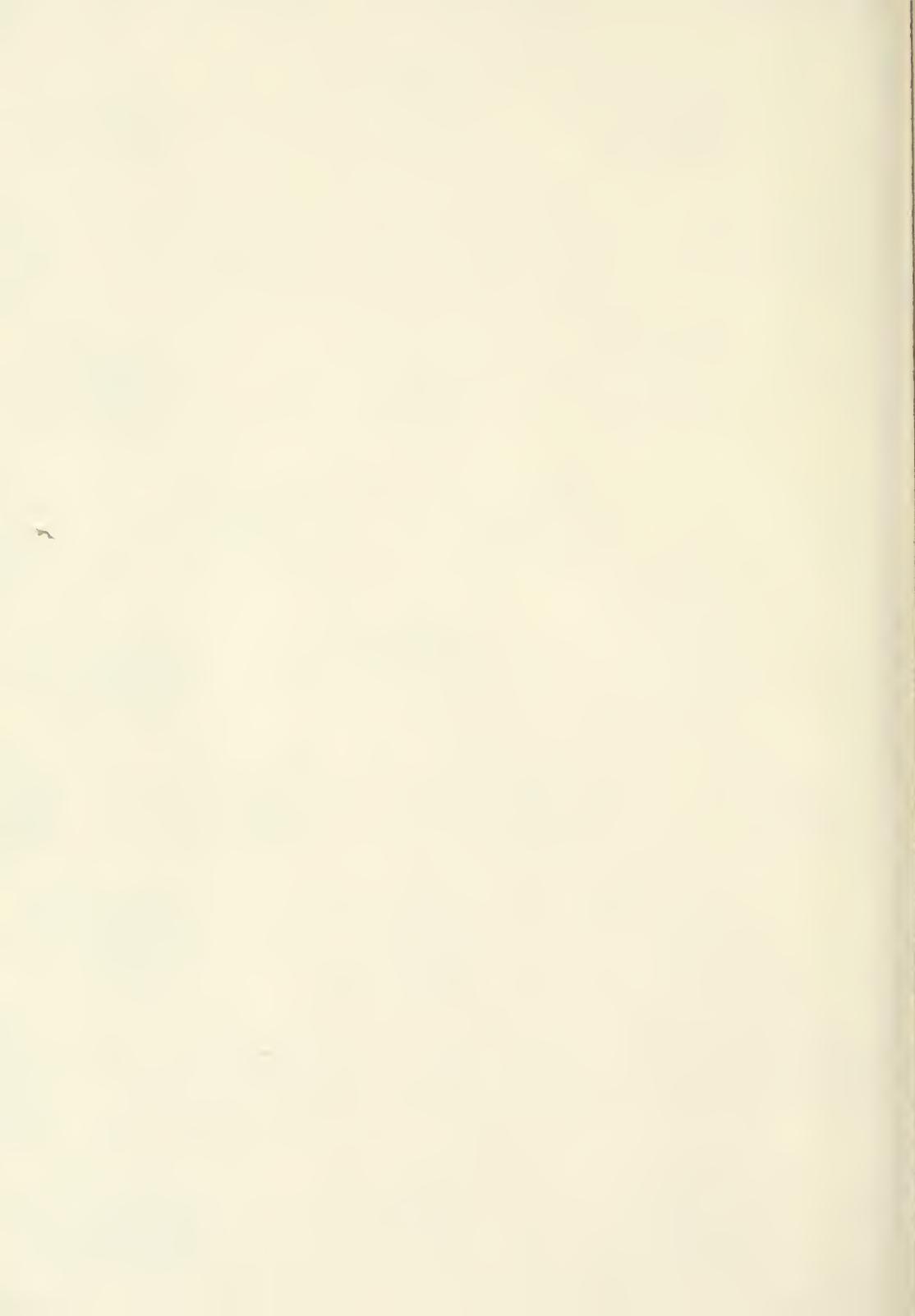
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John Blair

TO THE FREEMEN

OF THE

*Counties of Carter, Sullivan, Washington, Green, and
Hawkins.*

Fellow Citizens,

When about to close the official labors which your partiality selected me to perform, it imposes on me the pleasing duty of presenting to you a brief outline of my conduct, which will assist in determining how far I shall have succeeded in realizing the just expectations of my friends and constituents. I have not the presumption to believe that, on the various and absorbing topics of national legislation, upon which I have been called to act, that I have never erred in judgment, but I can with confidence assert that, with simplicity of purpose, I have on all occasion endeavored to advance your best interests, in common with those of our beloved country.

Since you last honored me with your confidence, we, in common, with the friends of our distinguished fellow citizen, Andrew Jackson, in other sections of the country, have had the gratification to see that, under all the combinations, which had been formed by men and parties (in other respects) the most incoherent, that the supremacy of the popular will has been asserted in his re-election for another presidential term, commencing with the fourth of March next. His original and uniform friends are afforded this additional gratification that, in almost every quarter of the country, his most uncompromising enemies, are now, from the irresistible force of truth constrained, (however reluctant) to acknowledge, that his devotion to country, virtue and inflexible integrity of purpose, eminently qualify him to meet the present alarming crisis in the history of our government. Never could a more propitious circumstance have occurred. His well earned fame

and overwhelming popularity, have infused new life and spirit into the friends of constitutional liberty, and, in many instances constrained his enemies to furnish a just commentary upon their former opposition. Already, meetings have been called in various sections of the country, where, but in November last, no term of reproach was sufficient, and loud and almost universal applause, bestowed on his late proclamation. Let us indulge the fond hope, that they are willing to break off the shackles of party influence, and award to services so signally beneficial to his country, the justice to which they are entitled.

It will be seen, by referring to the Message of the President of the United States, at the commencement of this session, that our relations with foreign governments, generally, are of the most amicable character. The claims of our citizens to indemnity for spoilifications, and illegal seizures, so long delayed, have been, under this administration, in most cases satisfactorily arranged with the governments, under whose authority they had been made. Thus, whilst our interests, collectively and individually, have been guarded with scrupulous vigilance, and we in a condition to continue in an onward career of prosperity and happiness, what are we called upon to witness? Nullification of a law enacted by the constitutional authorities of the United States—threats of disunion, secession and rebellion, calculated to drench this fair heritage with blood, and fill it with widows and orphans? Why is this? Is it because, that this government which has been our pride and boast at home, and the just admiration of the world, has ceased to be republican, and representative, and its laws oppressive and unequal. Surely not, to such extent as with the rude hand of revolution, to upturn its deep foundations, and incur the scourge of intestine war. I, too, am of opinion, that the tariff though constitutional, is inexpedient and unjust, and have used every effort in my power to obtain an alleviation of its unnecessary burthens; but whilst I regard it as an evil, it dwindles into insignificance when contrasted with the unconstitutional and alarming remedy claimed by the advocates of nullification. I look for justice to a virtuous people, who boast of equal laws, and must ever regard unnecessary taxation as a stain upon our free institutions. It has been my lot to witness as your representative, the successive changes which have been made in the tariff, in the years 1824, 1828 and 1832. The act of 1824 increased the duties generally on the protected articles, from thirty-three to forty-five per centum upon the value.

This, though an enormous increase, fell far short of that which was contained in the bill, which passed the representa-

tive branch of the Congress of the Union at that session, and was in the spirit of compromise and concession, proposed as an amendment by the Senate. It was finally accepted by many members who had voted against the bill as it passed the House—myself amongst the number. To that adjustment, though extravagant, little discontent was manifested; the country was labouring under a heavy debt growing out of the late war with Great Britain; and the discontents of the minority were hushed, in the consideration that, however, exorbitant was the tax, it was required to a great extent to discharge, the burdens of that debt and preserve the National credit; hence patriotism demanded the offering, and it was generously conceded. To the act of 1828 may be ascribed the calamities with which we are now threatened. That act increased the duties on what are denominated protected articles then provided for, from forty-five to one hundred and twelve per centum on their value. This increase of the revenue was wholly uncalled for, either, by the wants of the government, or a just and fair protection to the domestic manufactures; but was the result of that political influence which necessarily might be expected to grow out of over-heated party feelings, of which, it is now unnecessary to say any thing, as the scenes of that day are known to you all. At the commencement of the last session of Congress, the President in his annual communication (foreseeing the dangers with which our institutions were threatened) urged upon Congress the necessity of then reducing the duties on imposts, in this strong and forcible language: “The confidence with which the extinguishment of the public debt may be anticipated, presents an opportunity of carrying into effect more fully the policy in relation to import duties, which has been recommended in my former messages. A modification of the tariff which shall produce a reduction of our revenue to the wants of the government, and an adjustment of the duties on imposts, with a view to equal justice, in relation to all our national interests, and counteraction of foreign policy, so far as it may be injurious to these interests, is deemed to be one of the *principal objects which demand the consideration of Congress.* “It is therefore desirable that arrangements be adopted at your present session, *to relieve the people from unnecessary taxation*, after the extinguishment of the public debt. In the exercise of the spirit of concession and conciliation which has distinguished the friends of our union in all great emergencies, it is believed this great object may be effected, without injury to any national interest.” These recommendations were followed up by the Secretary of the Treasury in his annual report, and a bill was reported by the committee of manufactures profess-

edly to meet the views contained in the foregoing recommendations—and what was the result? After consuming more than an ordinary session in an almost interminable debate, the reluctant concession was then made of a reduction which left an excess of six millions a year of unnecessary taxes upon the consuming portion of the people of this country. For that reduction, inadequate as it was, I gave my vote, believing that, whatever was accomplished then, would reduce the amount in future contest, and in some measure give to the opponents of the system of high duties, an earnest of the future determination of Congress to reduce the revenue to the just medium recommended by the Executive branch of the government. As might have been expected, the President true to the principles contained in his preceding messages, again at the opening of this session, urged upon Congress the necessity of acting upon this subject in this forcible language: "Long and patient reflection have strengthened the opinions I have heretofore expressed to Congress on this subject, and I deem it my duty again to urge them upon the attention of the legislature. The soundest maxims of public policy, and the principles upon which republican institutions are founded, recommend a proper adaptation of the revenue to the expenditures, and they also require that the expenditures shall be limited to what, by economical administration, shall be consistent with the simplicity of the government and necessary to an efficient public service." This recommendation was also followed up by the Secretary of the Treasury in his annual report, with a full expose of the receipts and expenditures of the government, ordinary and extraordinary, and a recommendation that six millions of the revenue which would accrue under the act of the last session should be abated, the wants of the government in no wise requiring the same. The committee of ways and means reported a bill which was intended to reduce the revenue according to the Executive recommendation, but which, as you will have seen, has been overwhelmed in a protracted debate principally from its opponents.

What an anomaly do we present in the history of the world! The President of the United States, from time to time, urging upon Congress the duty of reducing the existing duties—his minister of finance, (who certainly ought to know better than all others,) recommending that the taxes of the people be lightened six millions a year. Almost every one who sustains the system of protection, admitting that the tariff must come down to the expenditures of the government, yet the representatives of the people had refused an alleviation of their burthers, not because the money is needed, but because, (say they,) this is not the proper time—and the interest of the

manufacturers require the country to be taxed. That bill has been under discussion since the month of December last, and every effort made by its friends to secure its passage, or that of some other which would tend to give peace and quiet to the perturbed feelings and passions of the people of this country. The prospect of ultimate success became gloomy, when, at a very advanced stage of the session, Mr Clay, of Kentucky, who had justly been regarded as the father of the "system," presented to the Senate a proposition to adjust this most distracting question. A committee of that body digested and presented a bill, which, from every indication, it seemed, would meet the views of a very large majority of that body. Whilst it was under discussion, in the Senate, and all hope of agreeing upon a bill in the House of Representatives lost, a proposition was made to adopt, as an amendment, the principles contained in the Senate's bill, and to my great gratification, it was adopted, passed without delay, and sent to the Senate, and has become the law of the land. This bill received the almost unanimous vote of the Southern Members, and so far as they expressed their sentiments on the subject, they did not hesitate to say, that the southern country would acquiesce therein.—Thus, has been adjusted that vexed and disturbing question, which for years has been an *incubus* on the legislation of Congress, a hobby for political aspirants, and the demon of discord in the country. The bill provides for a gradual reduction to 20 per cent. as the minimum, and allows until the year 1842, to reach that point. With the provisions of this bill I am content; because, I believe it will give peace and repose to the country, and again present us a united people. This act, (though far short of the requirements of the South Carolina Convention,) we are assured will be satisfactory, and acquiesced in by people of that state.

That unparalleled state of things which had been produced by the ordinance of the Convention of the State of South Carolina, gave rise to the call of the President of the United States upon Congress, for the passage of a law to enable the executive branch of the federal government, to execute the revenue laws within the United States. A bill was accordingly reported by the Judiciary Committee of the Senate, authorizing the collection of duties, at places other than the custom houses, within the same collection districts, either upon land or water—and when necessary to exact prompt payments in cash; as also to employ the land and naval forces of the United States to counteract forcible resistance, on the part of the State, or citizens of a State. This bill was lengthily discussed, and violently opposed by most of the Senators from the Southern States, but passed that body, and was sent to the House of Representatives, and has now become a law.

This measure was intended by the President, to save, if possible, the effusion of blood, in avoiding all collision with the state authorities, and to provide, (in case of actual resistance to the execution of the laws,) for the means of their enforcement according to the Constitution, without which, this boasted form of government would become a perfect mockery, and cease to merit the high eulogies so often bestowed upon it.

The question of the renewal of the charter of the Bank of the United States, was presented to Congress at this session, by the President and Directors of this institution. This application, it will be recollect, was made on the eve of the then approaching Presidential election, and more than three years before its then charter would have expired; no doubt for the purpose of being used as a political engine in that heated contest for the Chief-Magistracy, in case the President should persevere in his previously expressed opinion of disapprobation to the renewal of its charter. A majority of both houses of Congress agreed upon a bill, substantially renewing the former charter, for the further term of fifteen years, which was sent to the President of the United States, who, firm to his purpose, determined to hazard his own political prospects for the good of his country, and in the exercise of his constitutional right, put his *veto* on it, and prevented the law from going into effect. I am proud to acknowledge that I was in the minority of Congress on that question, and recorded my *vote* against it. To say nothing as to the constitutionality of creating such corporations, or the time and circumstances under which it was brought forward, it did seem to me that there were insuperable objections to the policy of such institutions in a republican government. It claimed the right of establishing its branches within the states against their will. It exempted the capital, employed in them, from taxation by the states: it allowed aliens to acquire and hold lands: it gave to foreigners privileges over our own citizens, and to those citizens who are stockholders, over those who are not stockholders. It conferred the power of controlling the money concerns of the whole people, to those who are not elected by, nor responsible to them. It deprived Congress, during the period for which it was chartered, of the right to legislate in reference to similar institutions; and was totally exempt from all obligation to aid the government, to which it is indebted for its creation, with its funds, in cases of emergency. These, with many others, are objections which forbade me to give such bill my support. But if doubts had before been entertained on this great question, I humbly conceive that they have been dissipated, by the decision of that august and sove-

reign tribunal—*the People*. The question has been submitted, and they have coolly considered and maturely tried it—and the result has been, that they, by a majority almost unparalleled, have sustained the President in his opposition to the bill, and passed sentence, as well against the Bank, as the majority of Congress who voted for it. To the decision of that tribunal, public servants should, at all times, feel themselves bound to submit with deference, and from whose judgment I humbly conceive there is no appeal.

In accordance with what I knew to be your sentiments, as well as those often expressed to you by myself, early in the last session, I had referred to the Committee of Internal Improvement, of which I was a member, and with the almost unanimous consent of that committee, was allowed to report bills to improve the Coosa and Tennessee rivers, and connect their waters by rail road or canal, and to lay out and construct a road from Portsmouth, in Ohio, to the south side of Lyneville mountain, in North Carolina. But you are aware, that in the excited state of public feeling, in reference to the distracting question of the Tariff, and that of the re-chartering of the United States Bank, as connected with the then approaching Presidential election, that these great and absorbing questions forestalled all legislation on matters of local or less general character. At the present session, the same great and exciting cause, instead of being mitigated in its intensity of interest, has not only absorbed the most of the time allotted to this short session, to the exclusion of other subjects, but has even threatened to push aside the indispensable appropriations for carrying on the operations of the Government. I take this occasion to say, that I still entertain the most unshaken opinion as to the constitutionality of works of internal improvement, of national character, but doubt exceedingly whether it is at all practicable to accomplish, for the interior of the country any important benefits under such system. I reach this conclusion, from the consideration, that since the organization of the Federal Government up to the last year, covering a period of forty years, the whole amount of appropriations from the treasury, for making roads, sea walls, break-waters, improving rivers, harbors, and making surveys, amounts to but the sum of six millions four hundred and thirty-eight thousand dollars, to distribute which equally over the forty years, would amount to but one hundred and sixty thousand dollars, not more than the income of two days in the year, supposing the revenue of the last year to be equally spread over the 365 days of the year. The smallness of this amount, when divided equally amongst the states, together with the heart-burnings

and discontents from its appropriation, in many portions of the union, furnish but slender grounds upon which to calculate for the future. This is not all—it is now apparent that our Chief Magistrate, anxious to restore the harmony and union of the people, has “earnestly recommended to Congress to refrain from its exercise, in doubtful cases, except in relation to improvements already begun, unless they shall first procure from the states such an amendment to the constitution as will define its character, and prescribe its bounds.” He urges the necessity of reducing the whole subject to some final and certain rules, and remarks, “that without some general and well defined principles, ascertaining these objects, to which the means of the nation may be constitutionally applied, it is obvious the exercise of the power can never be satisfactory. Besides, the danger to which it exposes Congress, of making hasty appropriations to works of the character of which they may be frequently ignorant, it promotes a mischievous and corrupting influence, by holding out to the public the fallacious hope, that the success of a certain candidate will make navigable their neighboring creek or rivers, bring commerce to their doors, and increase the value of their property.” Under such declarations, in connexion with former *vetoes*, upon bills which had passed both branches of Congress, who, that would call himself a friend and supporter of this administration, could wish to see the representative elected and sent to sustain the administration of their choice, engaged in pushing upon the President, bills to which, from his previously and often expressed opinion, he could not give his sanction—especially when the only object to be gained by such a course, would be to create unnecessary opposition, without the remotest prospect of benefit. It has been with no small degree of regret, that I have witnessed, on the part of Congress, appropriations for works of improvement, which, if justifiable at any time, certainly did not present the characteristics of being works of primary merit. Of that class I consider the bill for the improvement of certain harbours and rivers, which was prevented becoming a law, in consequence of the *veto* of the President. The bills which were reported by me, and of which I first spoke, it would seem, are not only National in their character, but are also of primary importance, and I flatter myself, if passed by Congress, would meet with the favorable consideration of the President. Of their importance, I need say nothing to you, who are in a condition practically to feel it, from the diminished profits of your labor, in consequence of the avenues to market being closed against your products.

For the first time, since I have had the honor to represent you, (consistently with the pecuniary engagements of the government,) was presented to Congress an opportunity of making some general provision for the surviving patriots of our revolutionary struggle. This arose from the near approach of that happy event which was to remove from our resources the burthen of a public debt, and without violating that good faith, which ought ever to be held sacred, presented the fit occasion to appropriate a portion of that revenue to the surviving veterans of the revolution. At its last session, each house of Congress, emulous to be foremost in this good work, presented bills to provide for that meritorious class of our citizens; and the bill which originated in the Senate, was, by a majority of both houses, completed into a law. Its provisions are now so generally known, that I need only say that that liberality which was so clearly marked in the passage of the bill, has been carried out by the executive branch of the government; and thousands are now in the receipt of its benefits.

To relieve from trouble and expense that portion of my fellow-citizens who reside in the counties adjacent to Washington, I have obtained an office for their semi-annual payment in the town of Jonesborough, which will be put into full operation within the ensuing month.

You will have seen that various projects have been presented for the distribution of the Public Lands, amongst which was that contained in the bill reported by Mr Clay to the Senate, and passed at a late period of the last session, and was but a few days before the adjournment submitted to the consideration of the House of Representatives. Under the belief that this subject was one of vast importance, not only to the new states, but to the whole Union, and seeing moreover, that if passed, it was not to take effect until after the rise of this session of Congress, I voted against that precipitation which sought, without even time to consider, to dispose of this great question, involving, on the one hand, the rights of the new states, and on the other, the powers of the Federal Government. My own opinion on this subject has been in favor of making a disposition of the Public Lands, on such terms as would eventually, at no very distant day, ensure to the states, within which they are situate, the sovereignty and control over them. That a graduation or reduction of price, from time to time, be made, so as to promote that object, and at the same time that a distribution of the proceeds or avails be made amongst the several states for internal improvements and education, according to their federal numbers. You will have seen the President's views, at large, on this subject, contained in his annual Message; you

will also have seen the almost unanimous vote of the representatives of these new states, in opposition to the bill to which I have had allusion; and, will infer therefrom, from the extreme probability that when peace and harmony shall have been restored to the south, that, without abundant caution in the disposition of the public domain, discontents and heart burnings must arise in the west. The duty which (in common with others of the American people) you owe to the country at large, calls upon you *naturally* to consider this great question, and so to express your will to your representative, (whomsoever he be) that amidst the various and conflicting opinions which prevail in the country, he may be enabled to speak your sentiments on that important subject. The bill which was presented at the last session, has again passed the Senate, and is before the House for its decision; but whether within the three remaining days of the session, it shall be urged on its passage, I am not prepared to say—certain I am, that every consideration of prudence would forbid the passage of a bill so important against the wishes of the representatives of the new states, and without even allowing them an opportunity of being heard.

Without injury to the hitherto much extended mail accommodations of the country, Congress, at the last session, was enabled to extend additional accommodations to those who had in a great measure been denied a participation in the conveniences and benefits of that important branch of the national government. Embraced in that bill were the following new routes, intersecting the District over which you gave me charge. From Elizabethton, in Carter county, to Morganton, North Carolina; from Jonesborough to Ashville, N. C.; from Blountville to Knoxville, via Cheek's X Roads, &c.; from Jonesborough to Newport, and from Abingdon, Virginia, on the Reedy Creek road, to Scott Court-house.—These several routes have all been put under contract and are now in operation, and upon most of them have been established post offices for the convenience of the citizens residing in their respective vicinities.

If, in the adjustment which has been made of the Tariff, the present Congress shall, by the mild means of legislation, have hushed the discontents of the South, without inflicting a blow upon the North, and averted the sword of intestine war, enough will have been done to gratify the heart of the patriot; and give him assurance that, whatever may be the dissensions amongst the members of this American family, that the same spirit of concession and compromise, which spoke into being the Constitution of our endeared country, will, when exercised, be fully adequate to sustain and pre-

serve it to the latest generations. Should, however, our fonc expectations be disappointed, and the assurances given by the votes and declarations of members from South Carolina be disregarded, and hostility be openly manifested against this law. ¶ The law which was passed at the present session arms the Chief Magistrate with means, ample in themselves, to resist and effectually put down that opposition; but which I trust in God, it will not become his painful duty to perform. I do honestly believe that this Government is fully adequate to all the purposes of self-preservation; that unless heartless conducted, or ruthlessly abandoned, it is destined to dispense its benefits and blessings not only to the present generation, but to unborn millions who shall succeed, "and call us, blessed."

Fellow-Citizens, the surrender into your hands on this occasion, of the trust confided to me, is calculated to excite in my bosom the most interesting sensations. By legislative interposition over which we had no control, a dissolution, and perhaps forever, from a part of you, of the political ties by which we have been bound together, are broken asunder.— On separating from you my fellow-citizens of the counties of Sullivan and Hawkins, I would be wanting in gratitude, as well as sensibility, did I not acknowledge the many uncancelled obligations, under which I am laid to your kindness, in common with others.

Ten years ago I threw myself upon you, when young, inexperienced, and almost a stranger; your charity overlooked my defects, and conferred upon me the high trust which is now about to expire; that same kindness has ever since been extended to me, through the vicissitudes of my eventful political life: as the best return which I have it in my power now to make for favors so signal, I can only assure you, that in whatever situation it may please Providence to place me, whether in public or private life, it shall be my pride to cherish in my bosom, and carry with me, the most lively and unsading recollection of your multiplied evidences of partiality for me. I would not do justice to my own feelings, did I not thus publicly declare, that in separating from you, I take with me no feeling of hostility, even toward those who personally have been opposed to me, much less for political differences, in which the spirit of our free institutions tolerates indulgence. May it be your good fortune to be blessed in future with a representative, whose talents integrity and republican principles, will enable him better to represent your national interests, and sustain the principles of rational liberty, than I have had the ability to do.

To my friends and fellow-citizens of the counties of Carter, Washington, Green, Jefferson and Cocke, I tender my services as a candidate to represent you in the 23d Congress of the United States. To you who reside in the three counties first named, I can only say that you have known me from my infancy; you have kindly conferred upon me every public trust for which I have been a candidate, and if again I should be thought worthy of your confidence, I would (as on all former occasions) devote whatever of talents I possess in sustaining the republican party, and upholding the principles of union and rational liberty. To my fellow-citizens of the counties of Cocke and Jefferson, to whom I am comparatively a stranger, I can say, should I be allowed the privilege of being your representative, whatever of zeal and fidelity I have on former occasions shewn to the interests of my immediate constituents, shall be extended to you, your interests and wishes. Indulging the hope, that, in the disposal of your votes, you my fellow-citizens of the District, will esteem the personal wishes and interests of each of us who may be candidates, as a matter of small importance, when contrasted with the paramount interests of your country. I conclude by remarking that, whatever may be your decision, I shall submit with cheerfulness, contenting myself to remain as a private citizen amongst you, if you shall determine that your interests can be more safely trusted to another.

I am, Fellow-Citizens, with sentiments of esteem and consideration, your obedient servant,

JOHN BLAIR.

Washington City, Feb. 27, 1833.

REMARKS or MR BLAIR, OF TENNESSEE,

*On the motion to re-consider the vote increasing the duty on
crude mineral salt.*

He said, that he had hoped that nothing would occur in the progress of this bill, which would have rendered it necessary for him to participate in the smallest degree, in the debate upon it. That he had believed he could better subserve the great interests of the country and his constituents, by silently acting upon this exciting subject; but from the fact that he had at the last session, and again on yesterday, voted against taking off the duty on that material, of which salt is so easily made, and now intended to change that vote, he felt it due to the House, briefly to assign the reasons for so doing. It will

be recollect that on both occasions, the duty had been fixed upon salt, previous to our being called upon to vote on this material of which salt is composed; that duty being laid, it did not appear to be just to draw so marked a distinction in favor of the consumers of salt, manufactured in Maine, over those who consume the salt imported in its perfect state. But said he, I am satisfied that salt is not one of the articles upon which there should be imposed a government tax. (save only for revenue purposes,) that the reduction of duties, even on this description of salt will inure to the benefit of some portion of our fellow citizens who consume it; and as my object is, to gain a total exemption of that article from all duty: the relief of this description of salt will be so much gained: and I will vote to re-consider, as well as to reduce the duty, under this distinct annunciation to the House, that if no other member shall do so, I mean to move, so as to amend the whole paragraph, as altogether to exempt salt from the payment of duty or tax. And, here said Mr B., I feel myself as the representative of a people, more shamefully extorted upon by a salt monopoly, than any other portion of this country, to present that grievance to the House, under the hope, that the American Congress will not longer afford its aid to their oppression. To present, said Mr Blair, to this House the most signal instance of exorbitant exaction on the part of the manufactures of a *protected article* that has occurred in this country; he would beg the indulgence of the House, whilst he read the account which had been given by two gentlemen: the one, interested in the salt works in western Virginia, and the other, the then counsel in the legal controversies, relating to the salt works; the one was Captain Francis Smith, and the other, the lamented Charles Johnston, late a member of this House, and known to us all. Mr Smith in his statement addressed to the Secretary of State, of the United States, and which is now on the files of this House, remarks; "that in the country in which he lives, (Washington, Va.) is a tract of flat land, containing about 500 acres, in various parts of which salt water has been discovered. One, only of these pits is now in operation, (the whole being monopolized by renting.) furnishing salt enough to supply the states of Tennessee, Alabama, and the south western parts of Virginia, tracts of country that look to that source for supply, making daily, 500 bushels of salt; and if all the water it can furnish was manufactured into salt, would in my opinion, make 10,000 bushels daily; but the market before mentioned, not requiring more than 500 bushels per diem, no more is made." Again, "of the quantity made at this single pit, now in operation, not more than eighty or ninety

thousand bushels are annually sold, owing no doubt to the price demanded for it; it now sells, and has for several years at one dollar for fifty pounds: it costs twenty-five cents to make it, but may be made for less;" though by taking the water to the wood, the whole cost of manufacturing would not exceed twelve and a half cents a bushel. Mr Johnston in his statement to the Secretary of the State, says, "there are at present only two salt wells in repair, and one, only of them in actual operation, being fully competent to afford a supply for the present demand. The salt works belong to two sets of proprietors, and by arrangements which have been made between them at different times, for the last five and twenty years, competition has been entirely avoided amongst them, during that time. This monopoly has yielded enormous profits to the manufacturer, after paying a rent from \$30,000 per annum, which has been the lowest sum, to \$60,000, which has been the highest, for the two wells. At present, the cost of making a bushel of salt, weighing 50 pounds, is estimated at $16\frac{2}{3}$ cents; but I have no hesitation in saying the cost might be diminished to $6\frac{1}{4}$ cents, with proper management, if the quantity made was doubled. During the last year, 120,000 bushels were vended.

What a commentary is this upon the protective system, so called here!—an establishment for the manufacture of that indispensable article, salt; one which is of universal consumption, and sustains both man and beast, is encouraged by the government, and for what? to encourage the growth and prosperity of domestic manufactures, say the advocates of the system. At the period at which the reports were made to which I have had reference, 124,000 bushels of salt costing, according to Mr Johnston's statement, $16\frac{2}{3}$ cents the bushel, is sold at the works for \$1 per bushel, and amounts to \$124,000. Subtract the sum of \$21,800 the whole cost of manufacturing that quantity at 17 cents the bushel, and you give the enormous profit of \$102,200 per annum. And what is still more intolerable, this guardian government, fearful that the manufacturer's interest will be neglected, gives a duty of 10, now 8, cents the bushels on foreign salt, amounting to more than \$10,000 a year to that establishment, to aid in carrying on this system of monopoly. It is true that locality has its influence in favor of the establishment of which I have spoken. But who, that will look at the map of the country and fail to see that our principal reliance in countervailing this unfortunate state of things which there exists, is from the influx of other salt from Mobile and New Orleans, being brought in competition with that.

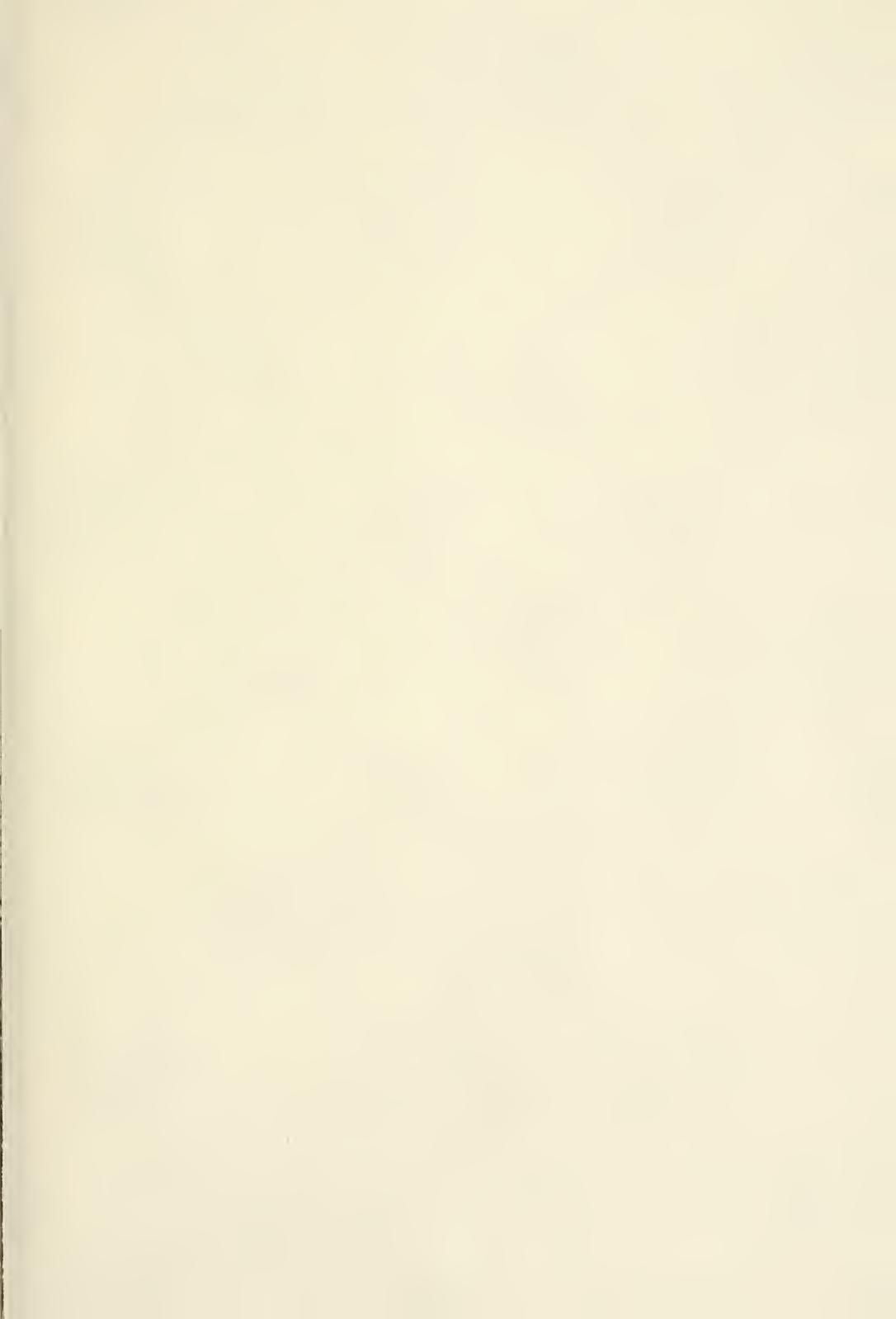
The Liverpool salt can now be obtained (as I am in-

formed) at New Orleans and Mobile for about 55 cents the measured bushel, very nearly equal to two of that which is made by evaporating the water by boiling; take off your duty, diminish still lower the price of the foreign article, and under the improvements now in progress on our rivers, the price of the domestic article with us must fall, not to a reasonable profit it is true, but to something making a nearer approximation to it. On this subject I may say, that I, in common with my constituents know, and feel the impositions of this item of the protective system, and in their behalf call upon this house to withdraw the assisting hand of the government from their oppressors. Mr B. said that he believed that this was a fair sample of the operations of this system, as regarded many other branches of manufactures, but he would not on any account be tempted to go into the consideration of the general subject—he had, for a considerable portion of the time of this short session, (and frequently sate in the night,) to hear this subject debated over and over again, and was sorry to say to those gentlemen engaged in it, that he had not sat with patience under their discussions. The condition of the country, said he, required action more than words, and for his part he intended to clear his skirts of the sin of wasting the precious time of this session, in debate which was worse than useless. That he would take his seat, after again repeating that when the question shall again come up, in reference to the duty on manufactured salt, that he would move to strike out *the whole duty.*

Mr Reed, of Massachusetts, in reply, said, amongst other things, "that, the district from whence the gentleman from Tennessee came, was an iron district; his was amongst other things engaged in the manufacture of salt, that he intended to move to put iron and salt together and see how he (Mr Blair) would relish that."

Mr Blair continued—It is true, Mr Speaker, that the District from whence I came, abounds in the mineral of which iron is made, that facilities equal to those presented in any quarter of the union, are there presented to the manufacture of that indispensable article. Indeed, said he, there are now in operation, very many establishments, all of which, I believe, are successfully carried on—and I may say, that iron is almost the only article upon which the tariff beneficially operates to the manufacturer, produced in that section of the country from whence I come. But, said he, I have been a member of this house, at the periods when this distracting question was under discussion, in 1824, 1828 and 1832, and when petitions and remonstrances were poured into this hall from various quarters of the union in reference to this subject,

and I can assure the gentlemen and this house, that in no instance have I ever been called upon to present a petition or memorial from my District. That people patriotically bore the high duties imposed for the war, and to defray the war debt, and if now necessary, would evince the like patriotism. That portion of my constituents, who are engaged in the manufacture of iron, ask of this house no exclusive privileges. What they ask is, that ~~to such extent as revenue is required,~~ the interest in which they have a deep stake, shall be placed upon equal footing with others of like importance. More than this they never have asked, less they could not expect, nor indeed would, I suppose, the gentleman from Massachusetts himself feel willing to grant. Sir, said Mr B. I feel disposed to allow each interest to rise or fall upon its own intrinsic merits, without any such unjust combination as that with which I have been threatened by the gentleman, (Mr Reed); and if a visitation injurious to the iron manufactures, (whose interests are now as well provided for as others in the bill under consideration) is to be made, on account that I have dared to present the grievance of the whole body of my constituents in reference to the article of salt, I can say to that gentleman he may reconcile it to his conscience as an act of retaliation, but sure I am that that conscience must be perverted that would regard it as an act of justice. I can also say that I shall not be unmoved from my purpose by the threats which have been made from that quarter. They do not come with a very good grace from the representative of a manufacturing state, when it is recollectcd that my constituents have submitted, without a murmur, to the payment of enormous taxes for the manufactures of the north, on woollens and other goods, ranging from fifty to 120 per centum, and now because they will not agree to allow a salt monopoly to perpetuate its impositions upon them, and that, too, by the aid of the Government, when there is no necessity for the revenue to arise. They are threatened that the ~~only~~ manufacturing interest amongst them shall even be deprived of that encouragement which can justly be extended, under the imposition of diminished duties, for revenue purposes. I forbear further to remark upon the gentleman's threat, and will conclude by setting him right upon another point. He says that his constituents, during the last year had gone into my District, and purchased a very large supply of iron, being the cheapest that they could obtain. I undertake to affirm that they did not come within three hundred miles of that place, to make the purchase of which he speaks. They probably may have made their purchases in West Tennessee.





WERT BOOKBINDING

JAN 1989

Grantville, PA

